

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A content management apparatus comprising:

acquiring means for acquiring content information
indicative of attributes of content respectively stored
5 in a plurality of storage devices connected to a
network; and

sorting means for, when creating list information
of the respective content using the content information
and displaying the list information in a unified
10 format, executing sort processing of the list
information according to setting information defining
display methods.

2. The content management apparatus according to
claim 1, wherein the sorting means executes sort
15 processing of the list information according to
information in a setting file defining display methods
for use when identical content is present, using the
information in the setting file as the setting
information.

20 3. The content management apparatus according to
claim 1, wherein the sorting means determines whether
identical content information is present among the
content information acquired by the acquiring means
based on conditions for determining whether identical
25 content is present, and executes designated sort
processing of the list information including the
identical content information.

4. The content management apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sorting means determines whether identical content information is present among the content information acquired by the acquiring means
5 according to judgment information for determining whether identical content is present, and executes designated sort processing of the list information including the identical content information according to information in a setting file defining display
10 methods for use when identical content is present, using the information in the setting file as the setting information.

5. The content management apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the setting information is information
15 in a setting file containing information for determining, for each category of content, whether identical content is present and information defining display methods for use when identical content is present.

20 6. The content management apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

display means for displaying in list form the list information sorted by the sorting means.

7. The content management apparatus according to
25 claim 1, wherein said sorting means is further operative for creating display list information according to filter-setting information defining

additional display methods.

8. A content management apparatus comprising:

acquiring means for acquiring content information
indicative of attributes of content respectively stored
5 in a plurality of storage devices connected to a
network; and

sorting means for, when creating list information
of the respective content using the content information
and displaying the list information in a unified
10 format, creating display list information according to
filter-setting information defining display methods.

9. The content management apparatus according to
claim 8, wherein the sorting means executes processing
in which content failing to meet a content reproduction
15 condition defined by the filter-setting information is
removed from the list information.

10. The content management apparatus according to
claim 8, wherein the sorting means creates the display
list information defining a display style of content
20 information of content failing to meet a content
reproduction condition defined by the filter-setting
information, which is different from a display style
designated to other content information.

11. The content management apparatus according to
25 claim 8, wherein the filter-setting information is
information in a file defining, for each reproduction
format of content, a permissible range of transmission

speeds of a server managing content as a content
reproduction condition, and each designation
information of a display style for use when
transmission speed of the server is outside the
5 permissible range.

12. A content management method applied to a
content management apparatus collectively managing
content respectively stored in a plurality of storage
devices connected to a network, comprising the steps
10 of:

acquiring content information indicative of
attributes of content from each of the storage devices;
executing first sort processing for creating list
information to be displayed in a unified format using
15 the content information; and
executing second sort processing on the list
information after the first sort processing according
to setting information defining display methods for use
when identical content is present.

20 13. The content management method according to
claim 12, wherein the step of executing the second sort
processing includes processing in which order of
priority in displaying applicable content information
is defined based on transmission speed of each server
25 managing identical content.

14. The content management method according to
claim 12, further including executing filter processing

in which, using filter-setting information defining additional display methods according to content reproduction conditions, content failing to meet the reproduction conditions is identified from the list information and a display style of the identified content is set; and

creating display list information for displaying the list information in a unified format including the display style of the identified content set by the filter processing.

15. A content management method applied to a content management apparatus collectively managing content respectively stored in a plurality of storage devices connected to a network, comprising the steps of:

acquiring list information of content from each of the storage devices;

executing filter processing in which, using filter-setting information defining display methods according to content reproduction conditions, content failing to meet the reproduction conditions is identified from the list information and a display style of the content is set; and

creating display list information for displaying the list information in a unified format including the display style set by the filter processing.

16. The content management method according to

claim 15, wherein in the step of executing the filter processing, the display style of the content failing to meet the reproduction conditions is set to non-display such that the content is removed from the list

5 information.

17. A content management apparatus comprising:

an acquiring unit which acquires content information indicative of attributes of content respectively stored in a plurality of storage devices
10 connected to a network; and

a sorting unit which operates, under software control, to execute sort processing of list information according to setting information defining display methods, said sorting unit operative when creating said
15 list information of the respective content using the content information.

18. The content management apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the sorting unit executes sort processing of the list information according to setting
20 information stored in a setting file defining display methods for use when identical content is present, said setting unit using the information in the setting file as the setting information.

19. The content management apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the sorting unit operates for
25 additional creating display list information according to filter-setting information defining additional

display methods.

20. The content management apparatus according to
claim 19, wherein the sorting unit executes processing
in which content failing to meet a content reproduction
5 condition defined by the filter-setting information is
removed from the list information.